

**TORRINGTON  
RURAL DISTRICT  
1961.**

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**REPORTS  
OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
AND  
PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR**

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For the Year ending  
31st December, 1961.

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4, Well Street.





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# STAFF

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## PART TIME OFFICER :

Medical Officer of Health—

Dr. E. H. WALKER, M.B., B.S. M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

## WHOLE TIME OFFICERS :

Chief Public Health Inspector and Surveyor—

F. G. GANE' M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

Additional Public Health Inspector—

C. A. KERSWILL, Cert. S.I.E.J.B.

Health Department,  
Council Chambers,  
Torrington.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE  
TORRINGTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

GENTLEMEN,

We have pleasure in presenting our ANNUAL  
REPORTS for the year ended 31st December, 1961.

We are, Gentlemen,  
Yours faithfully,

**E. H. WALKER, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.**

*Medical Officer of Health.*

**F. G. GANE, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.,**

*Public Health Inspector and Surveyor.*

# Torrington Rural District.

## 1961

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### GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (Acres)	....	....	....	....	....	79,803
Population (R.G.)	....	....	....	....	....	7,190
Number of Inhabited Houses	....	....	....	....	....	2,416
Rateable Value	....	....	....	....	....	£42,276
Sum realised by a Penny Rate	....	....	....	....	....	£168

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### EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR

Live Births	....	....	Male 29,	Female 23,	Total	52
Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated population	....	....				7.2
Deaths	....	....	Male 24,	Female 22,	Total	46
Death Rate per 1,000 of estimated Resident Population	....					6.4

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## Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health.

### GENERAL SANITARY CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT

#### Nursing

The District is provided with Midwives and Nurses under the National Health Service. Perhaps more use could be made of the domiciliary midwifery service.

#### Hospitals

The District is accommodated by hospitals at Torrington, Barnstaple, Bideford and Exeter. These are not nearly sufficient for modern conditions. The planners who wish to close most of these when the new Barnstaple hospital is completed can hardly be serious. If this should happen, very few more beds will be available.



Hospitals such as Torrington will still be very useful for such medical complaints as can be treated there ; also for minor accidents and surgery and stitching wounds.

### **Isolation Hospitals**

There is a joint Isolation Hospital near Bideford and a special one for smallpox at Whipton.

Tuberculosis is looked after excellently through a clinic at Barnstaple.

### **Clinics**

These are organised through the Medical Department of the County Council.

### **Ambulance Services**

These are satisfactory.

### **Laboratory Services**

These are available at Exeter and function well.

### **Maternity Services**

These are provided by clinics, midwives, and hospitals. Home compliments in most cases should be encouraged. This would make more hospital beds available for general purposes and the mothers could make their own arrangements.

### **Dairies and Cowsheds**

These are improving yearly.

### **Venereal Disease**

There is a clinic at Barnstaple.

### **Infestation**

Since the war there is very little and school nurses stop it quickly.

### **Mental Health**

Progress continues at special centres and Hospitals. Whether some of the young ones are really “naughty” rather than mental must be a problem with perhaps different treatment for petty thefts and damage. Examples must act as a deterrent to others—paying the cost of the theft or damage back in weekly instalments is a suggestion out of their own or their Dad’s pay packet.

The money the juveniles get these days must aggravate these troubles and also the troubles of prickle Heels and certain avoidable diseases.

## Water and Drainage

Main water is gradually becoming available more each year as is drainage.

## Housing

More are built each year—more 2-bedroomed type or small bungalows might be liked by the elderly and persons with no family at home.

Fixed caravans or large sites cannot be considered satisfactory when children and sanitation are concerned and even drying clothes, although mobile ones for short periods may be useful for persons who like them in a wet climate and if they will take their litter home.

## Immunisation

The results are very satisfactory amongst those immunised. It is particularly important that diphtheria and polio inoculations are kept up to date. It is obvious that the value of regular smallpox vaccination is not appreciated.

## Schools

Most pupils are now no doubt improving yearly as regards health. Some think that the Educationalists do not give the public and pupils very good value for the money spent on shutting up schools and augmenting bus services.

## Infectious Diseases

During the year the following were reported :—

Whooping Cough	18 cases	Tuberculosis	0 cases
Scarlet Fever	4 cases	Measles	159 cases
Pneumonia	12 cases	Dysentery	0 cases
Erysipelas	0 cases	Diphtheria	0 cases
Smallpox	0 cases	Poliomyelitis	0 cases
Food Poisoning	0 cases	Puerperal Pyrexia	1 case

This will be my last Annual Report and with great reluctance I have resigned, as the Ministry consider that after being a Medical Officer of Health for over 30 years, I have not got suitable qualifications.

# Annual Report of Public Health Inspector

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## DETAILS OF INSPECTIONS

Dwellings inspected under Housing Acts	....	....	....	85
Dwellings inspected under Public Health Acts	....	....		17
Re-inspections under Housing Acts	....	....	....	46
Re-inspections under Public Health Acts	....	....	....	15
Keeping of Animals	....	....	....	8
Offensive accumulations....	....	....	....	4
Inquiries into cases of Infectious Disease	....	....	....	—
Number of Rooms disinfected	....	....	....	—
Visits to Factories	....	....	....	26
Visits to Bakehouses	....	....	....	10
Visits to Schools	....	....	....	5
Food Inspections (other than meat)	....	....	....	2
Visits to Food Preparing Premises (other than meat)		....		15
Number of Water Samples	....	....	....	6
Building Inspections under Bye-laws	....	....	....	243
Visits to Council Housing Sites	....	....	....	171
Defective Drains	....	....	....	17
Drains examined	....	....	....	131
Plans investigated	....	....	....	95
Petroleum inspections	....	....	....	12
Dirty Houses	....	....	....	5
Miscellaneous	....	....	....	28
Sewage Works	....	....	....	262
Improvement Grants	....	....	....	224



## HOUSING

### 1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year :

(1)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects ....	85
(2)	Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ....	2
(3)	Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ....	11

### 2. Remedy of Defects during the year without service of formal Notices :—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action ....	15
---	----

### 3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year :

#### Proceedings under Public Health Acts :

Number of Dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the local Authority ....	13
--	----

### Improvements carried out and nuisances abated :—

<i>External</i>	<i>No. of Premises</i>
Walls repaired ....	21
Roofs repaired ....	19
Guttering repaired ....	19
Downspouts repaired ....	19
Chimneys repaired ....	13
Water supply laid on into houses ....	11
New pumps provided ....	—
Wells cleansed ....	—
Well steinings repaired ....	—
New lengths drain laid ....	74
Defective drains repaired ....	19
New inspection chambers ....	19
Septic tanks repaired ....	3
New septic tanks....	32
New gullies ....	19
New W.C.'s ....	74
Water supply laid on to W.C.'s ....	24
W.C. cisterns renewed ....	11
New washing accommodation ....	11
Outbuildings repaired ....	7

# **FACTORIES ACT, 1937 to 1959.**

1—INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors)

Premises (1)	M/c line No. (2)	Number on Register (3)	Number of			M/c line No. (7)
			Inspections (4)	Written notices (5)	Occupiers prosecuted (6)	
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities ..	1	58	11	—	—	1
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 applies						
(a) Subject to the Local Authorities (Transfer of Enforcement Order, 1938†) ... ..	2	—	—	—	—	2
(b) Others ... ..	3	—	—	—	—	3
(iii) Other premises under the Act† (excluding outworkers' premises) ... ..	4	—	—	—	—	4
TOTAL ... ..		58	11	NIL	NIL	

## 2—CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars	M/c line No.	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were	M/c line No.
		Found	Remedied	To H.M. Inspector	Referred By H.M. Inspector		

Want of Cleanliness (S.1)	...	...	3	3	3	...	3	...	...
Overcrowding (S.2)	...	...	6	...	...	...	...	...	6
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	...	...	7	...	...	...	...	...	7
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	...	...	8	...	...	...	...	...	8
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	...	...	9	...	...	...	...	...	9
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
(a) Insufficient	...	...	10	1	1	...	...	1	10
(b) Unsuitable or defective	...	...	11	1	1	...	...	...	11
(c) Not separate for sexes	...	...	12	...	...	...	...	...	12
Other offences (not including offences relating to Homework)	...	...	13	...	...	...	...	...	13
TOTAL	...	...	...	5	5	...	NIL	1	NIL

## OUTWORK—Sections (110 and 111).

Nature of Work	M/c line No.	Section 110			Section 111			M/c line No.
		No. of out-workers in August list required by Sect. 110 (1) (c)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices served	Prosecutions	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Wearing apparel, Making, etc.	13	40	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	15

<i>Internal</i>	<i>No. of Premises</i>					
Walls replastered....	....	....	....	....	....	11
Ceilings replastered	....	....	....	....	....	11
Windows repaired	....	....	....	....	....	11
Doors repaired	....	....	....	....	....	11
Floors repaired	....	....	....	....	....	19
Cooking appliances repaired or renewed	....	....	....	....	....	21
New sinks....	....	....	....	....	....	20
New sculleries	....	....	....	....	....	—
Baths installed	....	....	....	....	....	74
Food storage improved	....	....	....	....	....	70
Stairs repaired	....	....	....	....	....	17
Hot water systems fixed	....	....	....	....	....	74

### **New Housing Accommodation**

Number of new houses erected by local authority	....	8
Number of new houses erected by private enterprise...		10

### **Council Housing Programme**

The continued high rate of interest on loans has considerably slowed down the Council's housing programme and during the year only 6 one-bedroom bungalows and 2 two-bedroom bungalows were completed. Apart from a pair of one-bedroom bungalows to be erected at Langtree no definite programme has yet been adopted for 1962. The Council now has 170 houses and bungalows.

12 Discretionary Improvement Grants were approved during the year bringing the total up to 148. In addition, 62 standard grants were approved bringing the total up to 149. This represents an expenditure to date on schemes completed of £45,637 in respect of Discretionary Grants and £10,965 in respect of Standard Grants.

During the 8 years which the Council has been administering the Act it has made grants to modernise 230 properties which represents 11 per cent. of the total houses in the Council's area. This compares most favourably with other districts and is a record of which the Council can be justifiably proud.

### **Registered Common Lodging Houses**

There are no Common Lodging Houses in the district.

### **Caravans**

There are no proper caravan sites. Caravanning is confined to 5 individually sited caravans used for residential purposes.



## REFUSE COLLECTION

At the end of September the Council instituted refuse collection by direct labour and purchased a diesel Karrier "Gamecock" tipping vehicle specially made for the purpose, manned by two collector-drivers. Refuse is collected fortnightly throughout the area except for a few isolated farms and cottages. The refuse is disposed of on three tips at Winkleigh, Merton and Roborough.

## SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The villages of Winkleigh, Shebbear, Sheepwash, Taddipport, St. Giles-in-the-Wood, Kingscott, Roborough, Petrockstowe and Merton are now equipped with modern sewerage and sewage disposal plants. Work is at present under construction on a scheme for Yarnscombe to be completed early in 1962. Outline plans have been prepared for Little Torrington, Stibb Cross, Ashreigney, Hollocombe and Weare Giffard. Little Torrington and Stibb Cross should be started in 1962 and the remainder should follow in 1963 and 1964. When the foregoing have been carried out the following villages will need attention: Dolton, High Bickington, Langtree and Beaford. These have previously had a low priority because the villages had the advantage of being already sewered even though they had no proper disposal plants. It is to be hoped that the programme can now go ahead without further delay.

## WATER SUPPLIES

The area is now very well served by the North Devon Water Board via a network of mains and all villages and hamlets are supplied. Only remote dwellings now rely on shallow wells for a supply.

The following new connections were made during the year:

45 Domestic

43 Trade

The total number of premises now connected to the mains is:

1,505 Domestic

155 Trade

*(excluding farm houses)*

There are no standpipes in the district.



The following is a list of the parishes showing the number of houses connected and an estimate of the population served :—

				<i>No. of houses</i>	<i>No. of population served</i>
Alverdiscott	....	....	....	42	126
Ashreigney	....	....	....	80	240
Beaford	....	....	....	78	234
Buckland Filleigh	....	....	....	16	48
Dolton	....	....	....	118	354
Dowland	....	....	....	16	48
Frithelstock	....	....	....	64	192
High Bickington	....	....	....	83	249
Huish	....	....	....	14	42
Huntshaw	....	....	....	11	33
Langtree	....	....	....	88	264
Little Torrington	....	....	....	62	186
Merton	....	....	....	89	267
Peters Marland	....	....	....	47	141
Petrockstowe	....	....	....	65	195
Roborough	....	....	....	29	87
St. Giles	....	....	....	97	291
Shebbear	....	....	....	106	318
Sheepwash	....	....	....	67	201
Weare Giffard	....	....	....	60	180
Winkleigh	....	....	....	236	708
Yarnscombe	....	....	....	37	111

The water is treated at the source to counteract plumbo-solvency. Samples of the water are frequently taken by the Board's officials for chemical and bacteriological examination and the results are notified to the Department.

## RODENT DESTRUCTION

In conjunction with Torrington Borough Council a full-time Operator is shared by the two authorities.

The following work was carried out in the Rural District during the year :—

Number of Survey calls made :—

Private Houses	....	....	1,553
Refuse Tips and Sewage Works			37
Farms	....	....	193
Business Premises	....	....	62

Number of Premises treated :—

Private Houses	....	....	246
Refuse Tips and Sewage Works			12
Farms	....	....	61
Business Premises	....	....	3

## OFFENSIVE TRADES

There are no offensive trades in the district.

## INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

### Slaughtering

There are two licensed slaughter houses in the district including an abattoir at Winkleigh. 100 per cent. meat inspection is at present carried out but only with some personal inconvenience to the inspectorate owing to irregular hours of slaughtering and week-end killing. It may not always be possible to maintain this standard of inspection particularly during illness or holiday periods with the existing staff.

TABLE A

## Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part

*Figures in brackets are for 1960*

	Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep Lambs and Goats	Pigs	Horses
Number killed (if known)	1480 (1239)	415 (378)	4582 (2420)	59858 (51213)	7731 (8753)	— (—)
Number inspected ....	1480 (1239)	415 (378)	4582 (2420)	59858 (51213)	7731 (8753)	— (—)
<b>All Diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci</b>						
Whole carcasses con- demned.... ....	3 (7)	13 (5)	51 (14)	243 (170)	305 (63)	— (—)
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ....	96 (193)	150 (100)	3 (1)	1595 (1743)	203 (238)	— (—)
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tub- erculosis and Cysticerci	7.4 (16.1)	39.2 (27.7)	1.2 (.5)	3.1 (3.7)	6.5 (3.4)	— (—)
<b>Tuberculosis only</b>						
Whole carcasses condemned ....	— (—)	— (1)	— (—)	— (—)	2 (4)	— (—)
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ....	1 (1)	— (1)	— (—)	— (—)	168 (138)	— (—)
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis ....	.06 (.08)	— (.3)	— (—)	— (—)	2.2 (1.1)	— (—)
<b>Cysticercosis</b>						
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ....	4 (3)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigera- tion ....	4 (3)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)	— (—)
Generalised and totally condemned ....	—	—	—	—	—	—

Food Condemned	Weight in lbs.
<b>Due to Tuberculosis :</b>	
2 Pig Carcases and Organs .....	590
Portions of 1 Bullock ....	25
Portions of 168 Pigs ....	1916
	<hr/>
	2531 lbs.
	<i>i.e.</i> 1 ton 2cwts. 2qrs. 11lb.
<b>Due to Diseases other than Tuberculosis :</b>	
Carcases and Organs of 3 Oxen	1050
Carcases and Organs of 13 Cows	5261
Carcases and Organs of 51 Calves	1822
Carcases and Organs of 30 Pigs	2564
Carcases and Organs of 243 Sheep	9262
Parts of 247 Oxen .....	3718
Parts of 203 Pigs .....	981
Parts of 1578 Sheep .....	3269
Parts of 3 Calves .....	312
	<hr/>
	28,239
	<i>i.e.</i> 12 tons 12cwts. 0qrs. 25lbs.

TABLE B

## Summary of Meat condemnations with cause and weight

Condemned meat was disposed of through trade channels after staining with naphthalene green.

TABLE C

Other Foodstuffs NIL.

## FOOD PREMISES

The following is a list of food premises in the district :—

Grocery and General Stores	....	....	32
Bakers	....	....	3
Butchers	....	....	5
Fishmongers	....	....	1
Public Houses	....	....	15
Other Hotels and Cafes	....	....	2
			<hr/>
			58
			<hr/>



Seventeen Premises are registered under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, for the sale of pre-packed ice-cream and two for the manufacture and sale of fish and chips. No ice-cream is manufactured in the district. 15 visits to food premises were made during the year.

### **DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACT**

There are two registered swill boiling plants in the district.

### **PETROLEUM LICENCES**

30 petroleum storage licences were issued during the year.

### **SLAUGHTERING LICENCES**

11 licences were issued during the year to slaughtermen.

### **PLANS**

95 plans were submitted during the year, 91 were approved and 4 disapproved.

All plans were considered by the Council's Planning Committee before submission to the Divisional Planning Committee of the Devon County Council.

I attended the monthly meetings of the Divisional Planning Committee.

### **STAFF**

Again I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Kerswill for the conscientious way in which he has carried out meat inspection, sometimes under trying conditions. I would also like to thank your Clerk, Mr. B. W. Leatt, for his close co-operation and assistance at all times.





